

# **Newsletter of the LCHR and BRCHR**

Louisiana Council on Human Relations and the  
Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations

Dr. Paul Y. Burns, Editor

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## **LCHR and BRCHR Joint Annual Meetings; A Public Forum and Humanitarian Awards**

The Louisiana Council on Human Relations and the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations held a joint annual meeting on June 29, 2013 in the University Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 3260 Dalrymple Drive in Baton Rouge. The program began with a forum, the topic being “Exploring Issues Confronting Louisiana and the Nation”. This was followed by the awarding of the Oliver/Sigur Humanitarian Awards to Paul Y. Burns, PhD and Joyce M. Ben-Richard, LCSW, LAC. Business meetings were then held by both councils. Dr. Thelma L. Deamer, President of the BRCHR, presided over the program. Greetings were given by Mr. Joseph Dennis, President of the LCHR. The program committee consisted of James E. Cross, John Mikell and Jann Briesacher

### **The Forum: “Exploring Issues Confronting Louisiana and the Nation”**

The forum was very unique and was well received by the audience. There were seven enthusiastic panelists. The six topics proposed for discussion were (1.) Expansion of Medicaid in Louisiana and in Other States – and Associated Health Care Issues; (2.) The IRS Issue: 501C3 and 501C4 Organizations - The Limit on Political Activity; (3.) Gun Control and the Second Amendment; (4.) National Security Versus Privacy: First and Forth Amendment Issues, Concerns for News Reporting and Data Mining; (5.) State Income Taxes Versus Sales Taxes; and (6.) The

Benghazi, Libya Attack and its implementation for National Diplomacy, Security and the US Interest in the Middle East and North Africa. Because of the time constraint, the last two topics were not addressed. The seven panelists submitted a bio which was compiled for the audience. These bios have been somewhat truncated and included below. As can be seen, persons who were likely to have differing viewpoints on the topics were deliberately chosen as panelists. It had been decided that the political affiliation or other designations of the panelist would not be given. However, a clear indication of this could be gleaned from several of the bios. The moderator, **John Mikell** and the time keeper, **Jann Briesacher**, were charged with keeping the discussions focus on the topics and of affording an opportunity for the audience to participate.

The issue concerning the Expansion of Medicaid received the most attention. One panelist expressed the concern of cost, large government, and the lack of clear guidelines for implementing the Affordable Health Care Law. Another panelist explained that in Louisiana, most children are already covered under Medicaid and that the main group not being covered is the low income working persons above a certain age.

Concerning the IRS, it was explained that there are a number of different types of non-profit organizations but the three types of interest to this topic are 501C3, 501C4 and 527 type organizations. They differ in the degree to which they are permitted to participate in political activities. The recent

congressional investigation has involved the approval of 501C4 type organizations. One panelist explained that much of the controversy arose because the degree to which 501C4 organizations are permitted to become involved in political activities is not clear. Another panelist expressed the view that there was a political bias against the Tea Party and some related organizations and that this was the reason for these organizations receiving extra scrutiny, this being done during the time when a presidential election was approaching.

Concerning gun regulation, a panelist expressed a concern that the government might also decide to regulate knives, baseball bats, etc. Another panelist discounted the above view stating that it was not realistic. In respond to a question from the audience concerning universal background checks, the most conservative panelists, somewhat reluctantly, agreed with others, that to some degree, this would be acceptable.

The above exchanges provide a flavor of the treat to which the audience was given.



**The Panel and the Moderator**

**Abbreviated Bios of the Panelists:**

The panelists (with a portion of the short bios they submitted) are as follows:

**Creag Banta:** He has an engineering degree from Case Western Reserve and a Harvard MBA, and served in the US Army Corps of Engineers. He has been a leader in major transitions in several industries and communities. He was the product manager for the introduction of the whole body CAT scanner. The engineering team of which he was a small part subsequently won the Noble Prize in Medicine. He has been the head of technology for two major advertising agencies. In Louisiana his focus has attention on community development and enrichment. He is the currently the President of the Early Risers Kiwanis at Southern University. Creag represents LegalShield, offering affordable legal services for individuals and families, employees, small businesses, and commercial drivers.

**James E. Cross** is retired (for the second time) from the Electrical Engineering Department at Southern University after 50 years, serving as chairman of the Department for 27 years. Cross has a BES and MS degree in Electrical Engineering from Johns Hopkins Univ. and LSU respectively. In addition, he has the bachelors, masters and doctors degree in Theology from Christian Bible College where he also teaches. He served as an Intelligence Officer at the Engineering Intelligence Center in Germany at the US Army Europe Headquarters and was discharged with the rank of Captain. He serves on the Boards for the BRCHR and the LCHR.

**Sally O. Donlon** is a native of Lafayette, Louisiana, and an assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Ms. Donlon also worked on large federal education grants, funded through the Board of Regents, for 12 years. Before turning to education, she worked for almost 15 years in marketing and communications in New Orleans. Sally

holds an undergraduate degree in the humanities from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and a master's degree in urban studies from the College of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of New Orleans. She has completed her graduate studies in cognitive science at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, as well. Donlon has served on the leadership team of the League of Women Voters of Lafayette since the renaissance of that chapter in 2006. She is a member of the LA Democratic State Central Committee, was a delegate to the 2012 Democratic National Convention, and was recently nominated to the Democratic Parish Executive Committee in Lafayette.

**Dwight Hudson** is a local Realtor serving his clients in the Greater Baton Rouge residential housing market. While earning his Bachelors Degree in Criminal Justice from Southeastern Louisiana University Dwight was awarded the Outstanding Graduating Senior in criminal Justice Award and inducted into the Alpha Phi Sigma National Criminal Justice Honor Society. Dwight has served as the Legislative Director for the Baton Rouge Tea Party. Dwight has also served on numerous local candidates campaigns as well as serving as Senator David Vitter's Grassroots Director for the Greater Baton Rouge area during the 2010 election cycle. He and his wife founded and run the Political Action Committee Business Leaders for Local Schools in order to engage the local business community in the effort to create community based schools systems. Dwight also is serving as an advisor to the board for the Louisiana Chapter of Child Evangelism Fellowship.

**Mike Stagg** is a recovering journalist, independent videographer, writer, political activist and strategist. He's been active in Louisiana politics since the day he was born in Eunice in St. Landry Parish when D. J. 'Cat' Doucet was sheriff. He's been a

candidate for office, run campaigns, worked in the oil patch, driven trucks for Halliburton, published newspapers and books, worked in radio, and appeared on TV. He was part of the grassroots movement that won Lafayette its fiber optic network and is currently working with volunteers across the state to save Louisiana from the healthcare catastrophe that the Governor and majorities in both houses of the Legislature seem intent on creating.

**Charles "Trey" Thomas III, MBA, Ed.D.:** Dr. Charles Thomas III is the Executive Director of Family Values Resource Institute (FVRI), a 501C3 charitable and educational organization. This program provides four programs to empower the family as the critical building block of a democratic society including a crisis pregnancy center for women, marriage and family counseling programs, an adult learning and career development center, and as early-childhood learning center. He earned a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Education from LSU where he was 3-time Academic All-SEC member of the LSU Fighting Tigers Football Team. Dr. Thomas received a dual Master of Business Administration and Doctor of Educational Leadership from Texas Christian Univ. in Fort Worth, TX. Dr. Thomas founded HolSyn Consulting, LLC, an organizational development and strategic management consulting firm specializing in turnaround solutions for under-performing educational organizations and not-for-profit organizations. He serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the East Baton Rouge Parish Republican Party.

**Lauren Ventrella's** commitment to public service began at LSU where she pursued a bachelor's degree in Political Science. During her time at LSU, she served as a Congressional Intern for the office of Congressman Bill Cassidy and was active in the College Republicans. Currently, Lauren

is a student in her 4<sup>th</sup> year at Southern University Law Center and the Nelson Mandela School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs, where she is pursuing her Juris Doctorate and Master's of Public Administration. Currently, Lauren works as a Law Clerk to Aidan C. Reynolds, trial attorney, where she works primarily on civil rights litigation, general civil and business litigation, personal injury, and criminal defense. Lauren also serves as a commissioner on the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board of East Baton Rouge Parish. She serves as the Corresponding Secretary to Republican Women of Central, LA and as Legislative Chairwoman on the executive board of the statewide organization, Louisiana Federation of Republican Women.

### **The Oliver/Sigur Humanitarian Awards**

The Presentation of Humanitarian Awards is a traditional part of the Annual Meeting. Two awards are made in honor of Dr. James Oliver and Msgr. Alexander O. Sigur, both of whom were involved with the LCHR in its early decades of inception. They made significant contributions to human relations in Louisiana. Dr. Oliver was known as the father of computing at the University of Lafayette, establishing the first computer science program in the country. Msgr. Sigur was a beloved pastor who served in the Diocese of Lafayette. The two humanitarians being recognized this year are Paul Y. Burns, PhD and Joyce M. Ben-Richard, LCSW, LAC.

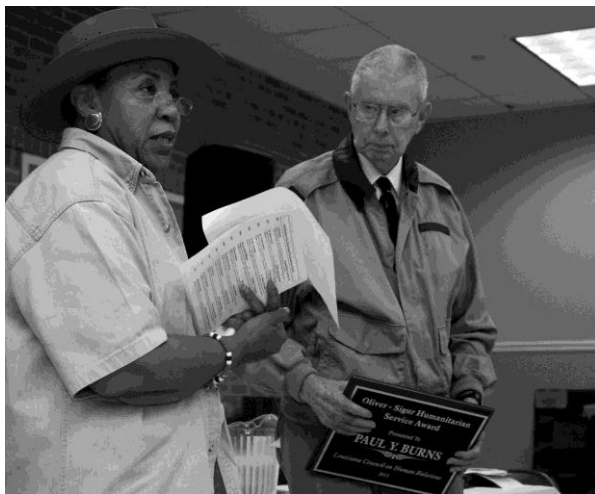
Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, **Paul Y. Burns** earned a B.S. at the University of Tulsa in 1941 and began work on an M.F. at Yale University. Enlisting in the Army Air Corps in 1942, he served as a weather officer in Europe during WW II, returning to Yale in 1945 to finish his M.F. and to begin Ph.D. studies in forestry, which he completed in

1949. He began a 38-year career in forestry education in 1948 at the University of Missouri. Seven years later he was recruited by LSU as professor and Director of its School of Forestry, serving for nearly 22 years as Director. Retiring in 1986, he became professor emeritus and was elected Honorary Alumnus by the LSU Forestry-Wildlife-Fisheries Alumni Association. At LSU Dr. Burns regularly taught remote sensing, mensuration, and forest policy, and occasionally taught other forestry courses. He taught every B.S.F. LSU graduate 1956-1987. Major professor for 20 graduate students, he is author or co-author of 117 publications. Dr. Burns is sketched in several *Who's Who* biographies, including *Who's Who in America, in the South and Southwest, in the World, and in Science and Engineering*. A member of honor societies Sigma Xi, Xi Sigma Pi, and Phi Kappa Phi, he received the Distinguished Alumnus award from the University of Tulsa in 1974. An active member of the Society of American Foresters since 1946, he was named a Fellow in 1986 and received an award for Distinguished Service to Forestry from the Gulf States Section in 1989. His work in the SAF has included membership chair, secretary, and vice-chair of the Ozark Section; historian of the Gulf States Section; chair of the Louisiana SAF; and chair of the national Accrediting and the Definition-of-Forestry committees. As a community service volunteer,

Dr. Burns received the Powell-Reznikoff Humanitarian Award from the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations, the Wade Mackie Peacemaking Award from the Bienville House Center for Peace and Justice, a Volunteer Activist Award from the Baton Rouge Speech & Hearing Foundation, and a Brotherhood Award from the Baton Rouge Chapter of the NCCJ. He founded Operation Hope in 1970, a local nonprofit self-help organization for low-income

families, and served as one of its officers for 34 years.

He was Chair of the YMCA-YWCA Advisory Board at LSU and the Southwest Faculty Conference; President of the LSU Chapter, AAUP; member of the Human Needs Committee, Baton Rouge Goals Congress; member of the Board of Directors, Louisiana Conference of Churches; Program Chair and General Chair, Mt. Sequoyah Ecumenical Mission Conference; President of the Louisiana Council on Human Relations; Treasurer of the Bienville House Center for Peace and Justice; President and driver for THE FISH organization, providing transportation locally for low-income persons; and adviser, Lao Association of Baton Rouge. He is member of several local and national civic organizations. He has served 54 years as an Elder and 30 years as a lay preacher in the Presbyterian Church.



**Paul Y. Burns**

**Ms. Joyce M. Ben-Richard** retired in early 2013 after 35 years of dedicated service in State Civil Service during which she provided outstanding leadership in Substance Abuse and Mental Health treatment services for the Acadiana area.

She came from a modest beginning in an old African-American neighborhood of Baton Rouge, nestled in the hills above the plain on which Louisiana State University rests, just off Highland Rd. Young Joyce set her sights on receiving a college education at L.S.U. At that time the number of African-American students attending L.S.U. was small. She was drawn toward a career in human services, and so entered the graduate program in the L.S.U. School of Social Work. She graduated from the master's program in 1976. After graduation, she was employed at the Lafayette Substance Abuse Clinic. She found gratification in helping her clients make major changes in their lives. Long after she moved into management, clients would contact her or tell people to call her if they needed help. Although her Clinical Social Worker credential was sufficient to work at all levels in the field, Joyce's commitment to the field was such that she undertake additional training and was licensed as a Substance Abuse Counselor. She went even further in getting credentialed to provide Clinical Social Work Supervision for those seeking licensure, as well as the Counselor Supervisor credential for those seeking Addiction Counseling licensure. Joyce took advantage of all available continuing education, the letters behind her name reflecting the degree of licensure; Joyce M. Ben, L.C.S.W.-B.A.C.S., L.A.C., C.C.S., C.C.D.P.-D. Joyce moved into the position of Clinic Manager, and then moved up to Administrator for Region IV for the Office of Addictive Disorders. When Mental Health and Addictive Disorders were merged in 2010, Joyce became Regional Manager of the Office of Behavioral Health and remained so for the final two years of her career. Joyce saw to it that her agency was client-centered. Training was provided and encouraged. Grants were sought so specialized initiatives could be provided, such as for pregnant

women. Because of budget cuts, there was a merger of the Mental Health and Addictive Disorders programs. This required a tremendous adjustment. Education and testing for HIV/AIDS was a continuing adjunctive service that was contracted. The new business model was one for generating dollars and the Magellan Corporation was brought in for a so-called partnership with the state mental health and substance abuse services. With this new model, she was instrumental in having the Tyler Behavioral Health Clinic moved from being a division of D.H.H. to belonging to a new local entity known as the Acadiana Area Human Services District. With local control there would be more flexibility in budgeting and decision-making. Joyce is an active member of the National Association of University Women. She is a member of the National Association of Social Workers and the Louisiana Association of Substance Abuse Counselors and Trainers. Joyce has been the long-time Secretary of the Substance Abuse Counselors Organization for Region IV.



**Ms. Joyce M. Ben-Richard**

**Dr. Richard Haymaker Reflects on the Milton Scott Story**

Last Sunday, July 7, The Baton Rouge Advocate published a story about a black man, Milton Scott, who was killed by the

FBI while being arrested for a crime that he did not commit. (For the story please Google Milton Scott The Advocate.) He was accused of deserting the Army. But this was a case of mistaken identity. He was never in the Army. In fact he was employed as a laborer by the LSU Athletic Department during the time he was purportedly in the Army. The FBI learned this easily very soon after the killing. This injustice occurred 40 years ago. The family is still seeking justice. BRCHR and LCHR participated in the chain of events that resulted in this story being reported again 40 years later. About a year ago I received a call from Maryam Bennett who lives in Georgia. She told me the story of the death of her father, Milton Scott. Maryam was born shortly after her father's death. I felt outraged by the injustice and wanted to learn more. She emailed me her clipping file. The file contained a letter written by Ralph Dreger, dated July 22, 1973 to Attorney General William Guste calling for an investigation. He signed it President of the Louisiana Council on Human Relations. And further the file contained a "FLASH" Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations, dated July 19, 1973, a one page summary of the story. Using this information Maryam searched the Internet and my name and contact information popped up as a board member of LCHR and BRCHR and past president of BRCHR. We stayed in touch. Maryam was further motivated by the recent injustice in the killing of Trayvon Martin. She was pursuing many options. We plotted further actions that could help the family deal with these events. I sought advice from family friends: A lawyer, Chick Moore, who represented the Hattori family following the shooting death of Yoshi Hattori; and Edward Ashworth who worked with Morris Dees for years in the founding of the Southern Poverty Law Center. I put her in touch with

Jim Engster of WRKF and David Brown of WHYR. David Brown aired an interview with her. I urged Maryam to write Eric Holder. She did and she received an acknowledgment from the Department of Justice. And I passed the story on to a friend, Jay Shelledy, a faculty member of the LSU Manship School of Mass Communications. His title is Professional-in-Residence and has 30 years of experience in daily newspapers and wire services and was editor of the Salt Lake City Tribune for 12 years. He was immediately interested in the story and carried the ball from that point on. He assigned two LSU students, Parker Cramer and Morgan Searles to do the research and write the article. They used the Freedom of Information Act to make public new information from the FBI. Jay lobbied the Advocate to publish the story. In my opinion an important question remains unanswered. The FBI agents tailed Scott for days before the attempted arrest. Did they have a photograph of the deserter? The Army initiated this pursuit of Milton Scott and it is certain that they included a photograph of the deserter in the file passed on to the FBI. Following Scott's death, a day later the FBI interviewed another man, Calvin Wallace, an inmate at San Quentin in California, and determined that he used the alias Milton Scott to enlist in the Army and later deserted. How did photographs of these two men compare? If this case goes to a trial these facts will probably come out. Without a photograph in the hands of the agents, and failing to pursue simple leads that would show his innocence and pursuing him with deadly force, this is a complete disregard for the life of a black laborer. So this story has been told again after 40 years. I am hoping The Advocate story can be used in some way to urge action that will result in

the family receiving justice for the death of their loved one.

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